

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of providing device software from a network, comprising the steps of:

providing communications via the network between a client machine disposed on the network and at least one network peripheral device, said client machine associated with an end-user;

5 notifying the client machine of the availability of the device software in response to a connection request to said at least one network peripheral device;

said end-user manually selecting for download one or more components of the device software; and

10 downloading said selected components of the device software from said at least one network peripheral device to the client machine.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said at least one network peripheral device in the step of providing is a network printer.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein said at least one network peripheral device in the step of providing is a network printer having a data storage unit associated therewith on which the device software is stored.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein said data storage unit is a hard disk drive internal to said network printer of the providing step.

5. The method of claim 3, wherein said mass storage unit is a non-volatile memory internal to said network printer of the providing step.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein said selected components of the device software in the step of downloading include a device driver compatible with said at least one network peripheral device.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein said selected components of the device software in the step of downloading include a device driver and utility software associated with said at least one network peripheral device.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein said connection request is a request to send a print job to said at least one network peripheral device in the step of notifying.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein said at least one network peripheral device in the step of providing is a network facsimile machine.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein said at least one network peripheral device in the step of providing is a network multi-function machine providing a plurality of capabilities.

11. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of installing said selected components of the device software on said client machine to facilitate accessing functionality of said at least one network peripheral device.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the step of installing occurs automatically after said end-user of said client machine downloads said selected components of the device software.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein said end-user of the client machine manually initiates the step of installing after downloading said selected components of the device software.

14. The method of claim 11, wherein said end-user installs said selected components of the device software on said client machine at a time substantially later than the step of downloading.

15. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of uploading the device software to said at least one network peripheral device by an administrative user for subsequent downloading by said end-user.

16. A method of providing device software to a client machine of a network, comprising the steps of:

storing the device software on at least one network peripheral device disposed in communication on the network;

5 communicating data representative of a presence of the device software to the client machine of an end-user;

establishing data communication between said at least one network peripheral device and the client machine in accordance with a prompt generated by the client machine; and

10 downloading the device software from said at least one network peripheral device to said client machine in accordance with said prompt.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the step of communicating occurs in response to said end-user sending a print request to said at least one network peripheral device which is a network printer.

18. The method of claim 16, wherein said prompt in the step of establishing is a manually-generated prompt such that said end-user selects one or more components of the device software for download, and causes said data communication to occur in preparation for the step of downloading.

19. The method of claim 16, further comprising the step of uploading the device software to said at least one network peripheral device by an administrative user so that said end-user can download selected ones of components of the device software in the step of downloading.

20. An apparatus for providing peripheral software from a network, comprising:

a client machine of an end-user disposed on the network, and operable to obtain a service provided therein; and

5 at least one network peripheral disposed on the network for providing said service;

wherein said at least one network peripheral notifies said client machine of the availability of the peripheral software in response to said client machine requesting said service of said at least one network peripheral;

10 wherein said end-user manually selects for download one or more components of the peripheral software;

wherein said end-user causes said peripheral software to be downloaded from said at least one network peripheral to said client machine.

21. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein said at least one network peripheral is a network printer.

22. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein said at least one network peripheral is a network printer having a data storage unit associated therewith on which said peripheral software is stored.

23. The apparatus of claim 22, wherein said data storage unit is a hard disk drive internal to said network printer.

24. The apparatus of claim 22, wherein said data storage unit is a non-volatile memory.

25. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein said peripheral software includes a device driver compatible with said at least one network peripheral.

26. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein said peripheral software includes a device driver and utility software associated with said at least one network peripheral.

27. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein said end-user of said client machine accesses said at least one network peripheral to download the peripheral software via a user interface.

28. The apparatus of claim 27, wherein said end-user installs the peripheral software on said client machine at a time substantially later than when the peripheral software was downloaded.

29. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein said at least one network peripheral is a network facsimile machine.

30. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein said at least one network peripheral is a network multi-function machine providing a plurality of capabilities.

31. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the peripheral software is installed on said client machine to facilitate accessing functionality of said at least one network peripheral.

32. The apparatus of claim 31, wherein the peripheral software is installed automatically after said end-user of said client machine downloads the peripheral software.

33. The apparatus of claim 31, wherein said end-user of the client machine manually initiates installation of the peripheral software after the peripheral software is downloaded.

34. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the peripheral software is uploaded to said at least one network peripheral by an administrative user for downloading by said end-user.

35. An apparatus for providing peripheral software to a client machine of a network, comprising the steps of:

at least one network peripheral disposed in communication on the network, said at least one network peripheral having a storage unit for storing the peripheral software;

wherein data is communicated from said at least one network peripheral to the client machine of an end-user that is representative of a presence of the peripheral software;

wherein data communication is established between said at least one network peripheral and the client machine in accordance with a prompt generated by the client machine;

wherein the peripheral software is downloaded from said at least one network peripheral to said client machine in accordance with said prompt.

36. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein said data is communicated from said at least one network peripheral in response to said end-user sending a print request to said at least one network peripheral which is a network printer.

37. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein said prompt is a manually-generated prompt such that said end-user selects one or more components of the peripheral software for download, and causes said data communication to occur.

38. The apparatus of claim 35, the peripheral software is uploaded to said at least one network peripheral by an administrative user so that said end-user can download select ones of components of the peripheral software.